

VZCZCXRO5558
OO RUEHBC RUEHCHI RUEHCN RUEHDE RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHKUK RUEHLH RUEHPW
RUEHROV
DE RUEHJA #1589/01 2340845
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 210845Z AUG 08
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9860
INFO RUEHXS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5319
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2932
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1219
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1190
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2135
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 3934
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2394
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 2900
RUEHBA/AMCONSUL PERTH 1061
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 001589

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, S/CT, DRL/AWH, DRL/IRF
NSC FOR E. PHU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/21/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [KISL](#) [PTER](#) [ID](#)
SUBJECT: RADICAL MUSLIM GROUP STAGES CONGRESS

REF: A. JAKARTA 1495
[1](#)B. JAKARTA 1276

JAKARTA 00001589 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Majelis Mujahiddin Council (MMI)--the political wing of the terrorist organization Jemaah Islamiyah (JI)--held its annual congress in Yogyakarta, August 9-10. The group chose a new "Amir" to replace former leader (and JI co-founder) Abu Bakar Bashir, who recently resigned from the MMI. During the congress, the group called for the implementation of shariah law.

[1](#)2. (C) SUMMARY (Con'd): Based on our soundings, the MMI has decided to move towards the political mainstream as a tactic to try to achieve its ultimate goals. Though he has branched off, Bashir remains an important figure in Indonesia's small extremist world, giving speeches around the country and maintaining connections with other radical elements. END SUMMARY.

CONFERENCE IN YOGYAKARTA

[1](#)3. (C) A small extremist group has just concluded its annual congress. The JI-linked MMI event took place in Yogyakarta, central Java, August 9-10. No notable mainstream public figures attended the Congress, at least not the public events which our sources observed. (Note: Our sources had no knowledge who attended the conference's closed meetings.) Only about 500 persons attended the conference, although MMI had touted that 1500 were expected. The conference garnered little press attention. (Note: In part, the lack of press attention may have been attributable to the Indonesian press being charged USD 22 to attend and the international press USD 110.Q

SELECTING A NEW HEAD

[1](#)4. (C) The group chose a new leader. Muhammad Thalib, a conservative Islamic scholar (see bio note in para 11), was

selected as the Amir or Supreme Leader of MMI, replacing Bashir, who had resigned from the position on July 19. Influential MMI official Abu Jibril was elected Deputy Amir ¶I. (Note: Jibril continues to maintain close links with Bashir, sources close to MMI told DepPol/C.) The remaining five members of the MMI Legislative Council are:

- Kamaluddin Iskandar, Deputy Amir II;
- KH Najib Ahjad, Deputy Amir III;
- Nashruddin Salim, Katib Aam/Secretary General;
- Farid Ma'uf, Deputy Katib Aam; Orde Jauhary; and,
- H. Irfanda Abidin, Baitu Maal/Treasurer.

¶5. (C) Irfan S. Awwas, Abu Jibril's younger brother, remains Chairman of the Central Executive Board, with Shobbarin Syakur as the Secretary.

¶6. (C) On the organizational side, the leadership decided that the Amir should defer to the Council on decision-making. This was a dilution of the Amir's absolute power, and a factor which ostensibly prompted Bashir to part ways and resign from his leadership position.

CALLING FOR SHARIAH

¶7. (C) According to a reliable source who attended the event, the Congress called for a national leadership committed to shariah law and its implementation. It also called on the government to implement the Indonesian Muslim Scholars (MUI) (a more mainstream organization) recommendation to ban the Muslim sect Ahmadiyah and to immediately ban all other "heretical" sects. (Note: In June, the GOI issued rules constraining the activities of the Ahmadiyah group.)

JAKARTA 00001589 002.2 OF 002

MMI MOVING MAINSTREAM?

¶8. (S) A former JI member, Arief, who maintains close ties with both Jibril and Bashir, told DepPol/C that the MMI intends to become more politically mainstream, gaining more supporters perhaps by even going so far as to align itself with a conservative Muslim political party. MMI's goal remains establishing a Muslim caliphate but its tactics are shifting, added Arief.

¶9. (C) Sources said Jibril and Awwas are much more focused on building their radical Islamic business empire, with its profitable publishing and speaking enterprises. Jibril is in high demand on the extremist lecture circuit.

BASHIR BRANCHES OFF

¶10. (S) Bashir, meanwhile, remains active. He has set up the Bashir (spelled Ba'asyir) Center in early July to promote his campaign to re-establish the "Muslim Caliphate" (Ref A). The center is headed by Abu Fida, a JI member from East Java, who was implicated in assisting the JI operatives who carried out the 2004 Australian embassy bombing, Jones told DepPol/C. Fida's most recent activity has been as head of FORSODIQ, a forum for solidarity with the Daulah Islamiyah Iraq. No one knows how many MMI members defected to Bashir, but observers all agreed that the number is large. Bashir remains active, giving talks across the country to build his own popular base, sources told us, adding that it is worth keeping an eye on his plans.

BIO NOTES

¶11. (SBU) Muhammad Thalib, born in Surabaya on November 30, 1948, has written many books on themes such as political Islam, family, and management. A 1978 graduate of Islamic University of Yogyakarta (UII), he has taught at UII for 15 years. He has been a commission member with the Muslim World League since 1989. He was a source for a study on

conservative Muslim perceptions of women and family done by
Dr. Suzanne A. Brenner, an anthropology professor at the
University of California (San Diego).

HUME